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SIGRID DEGER-JALKOTZY

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43.

S. Deger-Jalkotzy

The Aegean

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Manfred Bietak (Ed.)

The Synchronisation of Civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.

Proceedings of an International Symposium at Schloß Haindorf,
15th–17th of November 1996

and at the Austrian Academy, Vienna, 11th–12th of May 1998



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4.8.2. THE AEGEAN

Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy

AEGEAN POTTERY CHRONOLOGY AND SYNCHRONIZATION

Introduction

Aegean chronology and diachronic/historical studies depend almost entirely on pottery typology. The sequence of Aegean prehistoric pottery styles has therefore been studied since the beginning of this century¹. Unlike with e.g. Egyptian pottery, no *basic* pottery seriation is required for the Aegean regions. There are, however, *sections* within the Aegean pottery sequence(s) where the lack of sufficient amount of excavation material has hitherto not allowed for a clear definition of the typological development; moreover, new evidence has in some cases called for a *refinement* of typological/chronological series.

Cases in point include a clear definition of the successive phases and the diachronic development of Middle Helladic pottery which could update the chronological framework of the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C. Another case in point is the exact definition of the Mainland Greek pottery development at the end of the Mycenaean palace period and its transition to the post-palatial period of Mycenaean Greece (13th to 12th centuries B.C., or in terms of pottery chronology the transition of LH III B 2 to LH III C). A third example is provided by the pottery sequence from the LH III C Late through Submycenaean and Early Protogeometric periods, with special regard of regional developments. This period from ca. 1100 to 1000 B.C. saw the end of the Bronze Age and the transition to the Early Iron Age of Greece. It is generally called the Dark Age of Greece.

In terms of synchronisms between the various regions of the Aegean (the Greek Mainland, Crete,

the Aegean islands), as well as between the Aegean and the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean, i.e. the area covered by the subject of this conference and by the research program proposed by Professor BIETAK, the spadework has been done by PETER WARREN's and VRONWY HANKEY's comprehensive study.² However, the absolute chronology suggested by the recent data of natural science analyses have seriously challenged the synchronisms which up to now have formed a backbone of our historical picture of the cultural development of the 2nd millennium B.C. This is particularly true of the transition from the Middle Helladic to the Late Helladic period which saw the establishment of the New Palaces of Minoan Crete, as well as the emergence of the Mycenaean civilization on the Greek Mainland. The absolute dating of this period has always been based upon the cross-dating between Crete, Thera and Egypt. This has been now disputed on the basis of the natural science datings of the Thera eruption. It is therefore clear that the SCIEM project is bound to concentrate on this period. Crucial to its synchronisms are the sites of Minoan Crete which PETER WARREN has compiled in his contribution to this Conference.³ Equally important is the site of Kolonna on the island of Aigina where the excavations carried out by the Institute of Classical Archaeology of the University of Salzburg have yielded an unbroken settlement sequence and stratigraphy from the Late Neolithic to the Mycenaean period. At the turn from the Early to the Middle Helladic period at the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C. the site developed into a heavily fortified town whose inhabitants sustained a remarkably high standard of civilization and entertained lively commercial and cultural con-

¹ The pioneer work was done by A. J. B. WACE and C. W. BLEGEN, cf. their article The Pre-Mycenaean Pottery of the Greek Mainland, *BSA* 22 (1916-1918), 175-189. As to the pottery of the 2nd millennium B.C. see their Pottery as Evidence for Trade and Colonisation in the Aegean Bronze Age, *Klio* 32 (1939), 131-147. A useful survey of the present state of research is provided by the Proceedings of the International Conference the American School of Classical

Studies at Athens in 1989 on *Wace and Blegen. Pottery as Evidence for Trade in the Aegean Bronze Age 1939-1989* (ed. C. ZERNER), 1993.

² P. WARREN and V. HANKEY, *Aegean Bronze Age Chronology*, 1989.

³ Now Projekt 5.13 of the SFB under the direction of STEFAN HILLER.

nections with most civilizations of the Eastern Mediterranean. The archaeological record of Aigina has yielded imports from Crete, Greece, from the islands, from Cyprus and from Anatolia. It therefore seems most desirable that Aigina, too, be included among the projects of this Research Program and that the rich evidence of the island's international relationships be investigated by experts.⁴

I for one would like to propose a project which deals with the *End of the Mycenaean Culture*. Towards the close of the 13th century B.C. (in archaeological terms the end of the pottery phase LH III B 2 as mentioned above) the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces brought to a close the first high civilization achieved by the Greeks. Although these catastrophes marked a dramatic turning point of Greek history, they did not spell the end of the Mycenaean Age. The civilization of the postpalatial period (the 12th and early 11th centuries B.C., in archaeological terms LH III C) remained Mycenaean in character. Yet it was an illiterate age, lacking in the higher arts, crafts and intellectual achievements, the same postpalatial age of Greece brought about a fundamental reorganization of social, political and economic systems, as well as the gradual transformation of the Mycenaean cultural heritage into a constituent part of the Early Hellenic (or Early Iron Age) civilization of the Greeks.⁵ It was only during the later 11th century B.C. that the above mentioned transition from the Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age of Greece witnessed the end of the Mycenaean civilization and the inauguration of the new era of the Protogeometric culture.

The period LH III C was first comprehensively treated in 1964 by V. DESBOROUGH in a famous book⁶ which still is widely referred to, particularly by scholars of neighbouring fields who are not so familiar with the current developments of Aegean Prehistory. Brilliant as it is, this book is now outdated: during the last 25 years a remarkable increase of archaeological evidence has added much new material relating to this most important period of Greek history.

The diachronic dimension of the period is now traceable by the typological development of the pottery deposits both of settlement and of the substantial burial deposits. It is now possible to subdivide the LH III C period into an Early, a Middle, and a Late phase.⁷ Conversely, these subphases display a great deal of regional variation, and the chronological correlation between the pottery developments of the various regions of the Aegean is far from clear. Even the basic framework of reference provided by the Argive sequence shows divergences between the seriations of the two principal sites of Tiryns and Mycenae!

To help understand the historical developments of the postpalatial period in Greece, it is therefore of principal importance to establish the synchronisms of LH III C pottery developments of the various regions of the postpalatial age of Mycenaean Greece, as well as of the transition to the Submycenaean and Protogeometric era. This task remains still in its initial stage as large amounts of new material still await publication. It is no exaggeration to say that a major desideratum of research into the early history of the Aegean consists in the publication of the many LH III C sites excavated during the last quarter of our century.

Therefore, the idea of the proposed project is to contribute both to rectifying this situation and to a better understanding of the historical development of a period which was of great importance to the emergence of the civilizations of classical antiquity. It comprises three parts:

- 1) The publication of the Mycenaean evidence from Aigeira in Achaia, a settlement of the LH III C period which was excavated by the Austrian Archaeological Institute.
- 2) The investigation of two Late Minoan III C sites in Crete: fortified hill settlement at Kastrokephala near Iraklion, and the sanctuary on Mount Iouktas south of Knossos. These projects will be carried out in co-operation with Professor ATHANASIA KANTA and Ephoros ALEXANDRA KARETSOU who are both present at our Conference.

⁴ Now Projekt 5.15 directed by FLORENS FELTEN.

⁵ Cf. J. B. RUTTER, Cultural Novelties in the Post-Palatial Aegean World: Indices of Vitality or Decline?, in: W. A. WARD, M. SHARP JOKOWSY (eds.), *The Crisis Years: The 12th Century B.C. From Beyond the Danube to the Tigris*, (1992), 61–78; S. DEGER-JALKOTZY, The last Mycenaeans and their Successors updated, in: S. GITIN, A. MAZAR, E. STERN (eds.), *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition. Thirteenth to Early Tenth Centuries BCE. In Honor of Professor Trude Dothan* (1998), 114–128.

⁶ V. R. d'A. DESBOROUGH, *The Last Mycenaeans and Their Successors* (1964).

⁷ See the compilations by F. SCHACHERMEYR, *Die ägäische Frühzeit IV: Griechenland im Zeitalter der Wanderungen vom Ende der mykenischen Ära bis auf die Dorier* (1980) and J. VANSCHOONWINKEL, *L'Égée et la Méditerranée Orientale à la fin du deuxième millénaire. Témoignages archéologiques et sources écrites* (1991).

3) Study of the correlation between the pottery sequences, i.e. of the chronologies, of Greece, Crete, the Aegean islands and the Eastern Mediterranean.⁸ Emphasis will be laid on the correlation of the chronological phases of postpalatial Greek mainland and Crete, but also on the correlations of Late Cypriote III A and III B and Aegean pottery sequence. This latter part of the project will touch upon the longstanding debate on migrations from the Aegean to Cyprus, either of the "Sea Peoples" or of Mycenaean refugees. It will also deal with the problem of an Aegean or even Mycenaean origin of the Philistine culture.

The Aigeira Publication Project

We suggest that the End of the Mycenaean Age project should start by the publication of the Mycenaean III C settlement of Aigeira (above TOP 1).

On top of the settlement hill of the Hellenistic and Roman town of Aigeira, the ruins of a Mycenaean settlement were excavated which exclusively date from the LH III C period. In the fissures of the bedrock below the Mycenaean settlement pottery remains of earlier prehistoric periods were found.

Given the fact that until now no stratified finds of Mycenaean settlements of Achaia have been published and cannot be expected to be published in the near future, the pottery sequence from Aigeira will lay the foundations for establishing the chronology of the LH III C period of Mycenaean Achaia. It will further help to establish the chronological sequence of the funerary assemblages of the rich LH III C cemeteries which have been until now excavated in Western Achaia. Thus the pottery finds from Aigeira and the small associated finds will be of vital importance for gaining an insight into the cultural and historical developments of Achaia during the post-palatial Mycenaean period of LH III C, when this district in fact was at the height of prosperity.

The correlations of the Aigeira material with other regions of the Peloponnese, with regions on the other side of the Corinthian Gulf and of Central Greece, with the Ionian islands and particularly with Crete will add important informations to our understanding of the course of events in Greece after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces. Of particular interest

is the so-called "Barbarian" handmade burnished pottery which, like at many other sites of LH III C, was also found at Aigeira.

The Aigeira LH III C project will also include the study, analysis and publication of the "Dark Age" pottery, of the Late Neolithic and Early Helladic pottery, of a few Middle-Helladic sherds, and, of course, the plant and animal remains.

Previous Research:

The site called Palaiokastros above Aigeira in North-eastern Achaia (close to the boundary between the districts of Achaia and of Corinthia) was already investigated before World War I, when OTTO WALTER discovered the ancient theatre and the famous marble head called "the Zeus of Aigeira" now exhibited in the Greek National Museum at Athens.

In 1972 the Austrian Archaeological Institute resumed excavations at Aigeira under the direction of Professor WILHELM ALZINGER of the Vienna University. In the course of these excavations Mycenaean ruins were discovered on top of the settlement hill which rises up to 400 m above sea level.

From 1975 onwards the "Mycenaean Acropolis" of Aigeira was excavated. The settlement of the plateau on top of the hill turned out to belong entirely to the LH III C period, with some continuity into the so-called "Dark Ages". From the outset of these discoveries much attention has been paid to a non-Mycenaean handmade burnished pottery (called "Barbarian") which was found, like at many other sites, in the Mycenaean levels together with the wheelmade Mycenaean pottery. Differently from other sites, however, this pottery was found at Aigeira also in a layer below the earliest floor of the LH III C settlement. This evidence has caused much dispute among Mycenaean scholars, and certainly a detailed report on the find situation of this material will be an important issue of the final publication.

The later LH III C levels (from LH III C Advanced onwards) were found disturbed by building activities during the Archaic period. During that era the summit of the hill was transformed into a sacred area and a large temple was built.

There was no evidence of a Mycenaean settlement earlier than LH III C.

⁸ Such studies have still not advanced beyond an initial stage. See now the disputes concerning the periodization and synchronization of Late Minoan III C pottery in the recently published Proceedings of a 1994 Conference at the Danish

Institute at Athens: E. HALLAGER and B.P. HALLAGER (eds.), *Late Minoan III Pottery. Chronology and Terminology* (1997).

In the fissures below the Mycenaean settlement, pottery fragments of Late Neolithic, Early Helladic and Middle Helladic (only a few fragments) were found. Blades of obsidian and radiolarit most probably have to be attributed to these prehistoric periods.

On the terraces below the plateau of the hilltop, several trenches were opened in 1972, 1975, 1976 and 1977. They have produced a few Mycenaean house remains, as well as a considerable amount of LH III C and some Dark Age pottery. The easternmost trench has also produced "Barbarian" and prehistoric pottery below the Mycenaean floors.

In 1981 the excavation of the Mycenaean settlement was completed. The ruins were again covered with earth, except for the Mycenaean potter's kiln and the cistern which were fixed and roofed over.

Study of the excavation evidence always went alongside with the field work. From 1973 until 1978 Professor FRITZ SCHACHERMEYR was in charge of the Mycenaean pottery. As from 1979 I handed over the technical works in the field to EVA ALRAM-STERN, myself acting as a supervisor. I then mainly concentrated on the study of the Mycenaean finds, supervising also the cleaning and the mending operations. Dr. Alram-Stern was appointed to study the small finds.

Until 1986, our studies focussed on the evidence of the central part of the Mycenaean settlement where most of the house remnants, as well as a Mycenaean potter's kiln and a relatively well preserved stratigraphy had been encountered. The architectural remains, the pottery and the small finds were completely studied, described and drawn in pencil.

Research into the other areas of the Mycenaean settlement did not proceed as far as that of the central part. Only the study of the architectural remains of the eastern and western parts of the plateau was performed. Of the pottery, the decorated fragments were described and drawn in pencil. Study into the undecorated and the monochrome pottery was shelved.

Study of the evidence produced by the trenches on the terraces below the plateau on the hilltop is hampered by the fact that the excavation of this area had started before Dr. Alram and I joined the team. Nevertheless, the decorated Mycenaean and Dark Age pottery was drawn and described by Dr. Alram. The excavation plans, however, need further study which will relate the results of our own fieldwork to the evidence of the previous campaigns.

Publications went alongside with the fieldwork and with the progress of the material study (see the list enclosed below). Of these, my short monograph

on the "Barbarian" pottery from Aigeira (1977) and the preliminary report on the Mycenaean Acropolis of Aigeira in *Klio* 67 (1986) by W. ALZINGER, E. ALRAM-STERN and by myself may be pointed out.

Our Aigeira studies came to a halt after 1986 for several reasons.

In 1995 I received a financial support by the Institute of Studies in Aegean Prehistory at New York to carry on our studies, aiming at the final report of evidence from the central area of the plateau on top of the Acropolis (see above). With the backing of this support, the pencil drawings which we had previously made of the pottery were completed in ink, and the descriptions of the pottery fragments were filed on an electronic database which will serve as the base for the compilation of the pottery catalogue and for the statistical evaluation of the material.

Study of materials in the magazines of the Patras Ephorate for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities at Aigion was delayed by the damage done by the great earthquake of 1995. After the re-organisation of the Mycenaean finds from Aigeira in 1996, we were able to carry on in 1996 and 1997.

During these two seasons I was able to check upon some work which we had done in the course of our earlier studies and which was necessary before the manuscript can actually get started.

Dr. Alram-Stern worked on the pre-Mycenaean pottery finds, the bulk of which pertains to the transitional period from Late Neolithic to Early Helladic. This evidence ties right up with most recent discoveries at several comparable sites from various other parts of the Peloponnese, thus fitting the evidence from Aigeira into a general framework. Dr. Alram presented her results a few weeks ago, giving a paper at the Symposium which celebrated in March the Centenary of the Austrian Archaeological Institute at Athens. She is now preparing the manuscript of the final publication of this material group which, in the light of the most recent developments of research into the prehistory of Greece, has proved to be of major significance.

We will be carrying on with our work at Aigion in 1998. After that, the funds given to us by INSTAP will have expired and our report will be due to this institution.

Previous Published Works

ALRAM-STERN, E., Die mykenischen Idole von Aigeira. 2. Österreichischer Archäologentag, Schloß Seggau bei Leibnitz 1985. *Mitteilungen der Archäologischen Gesellschaft Graz*, Beiheft 1, Graz 1987, 4-7. — EADEM, *Prähistorische Keramik von der Akropolis von Aigeira*. Vortrag am Kongreß "1898-1998.

100 Jahre österreichisches Archäologisches Institut Athen. Forschungen in der Peloponnes. Symposium Athen 5.3.-7.3. 1998" (im Druck). – ALZINGER, W., Aigeira 1972, *AAA* 6, 1973, 197. – IDEM, Aigeira 1973, *AAA* 7, 1974, 161. – IDEM, Aigeira 1975, *AAA* 9, 1976, 162f. – DEGER-JALKOTZY, S., *Fremde Zuwanderer im Spätmykenischen Griechenland. Zu einer Gruppe handgemachter Keramik aus Myk. IIIC Siedlungsschichten von Aigeira*. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl. Sitzungsberichte Bd. 326, Wien 1977. – EADEM, *Die Carinierte Tasse FS 240. Ein "Leitfossil" der mykenischen Chronologie und seine Geschichte*, in: *Pro Arte Antiqua. Festschrift Hedwig Kenner*, Bd. I, Wien 1982. – EADEM, *Das Problem der "Handmade Burnished Ware" von Myk. IIIC*, in: *Griechenland, die Ägais und die Levante während der "Dark Ages" vom 12. bis zum 9. Jh. v. Chr. Akten des Symposiums von Stift Zwettl (NÖ) 11.-14. Oktober 1980*. ÖAW, phil.-hist. Kl. Sitzungsberichte Bd. 418, Wien 1983, 161-178. – EADEM und ALRAM-STERN, E., Akropolis. Die mykenische Siedlung, in: ALZINGER, W., und Mitarbeiter, *Aigeira-Hyperesia und die Siedlung Phelloe in Achaia, I. Österreichische Ausgrabungen auf der Peloponnes 1972-1983*, *Klio* 67, (1985), 394-426. – DEGER-JALKOTZY, S., *Zum Ende der mykenischen Zeit in Achaia*, in *Forschungen zur Ägäischen Vorgeschichte: Das Ende der mykenischen Welt*, hrg. von E. THOMAS, Köln 1987, 1-5. – EADEM, *Zum Verlauf der Periode SH IIIC in Achaia*, in: *Achaia und Elis in der Antike. Akten für das internationale Symposium Athen, 19.-21. Mai 1981*, A.D. RIZAKIS ed., Athen 1991, 19-29. – SCHACHERMEYR, F., *Die ägäische Frühzeit, Bd. 2, Die mykenische Zeit und die Gesittung von Thera*, Wien 1976, 156f. – IDEM, *Die ägäische Frühzeit, Bd. 4, Griechenland im Zeitalter der Wanderungen. Vom Ende der mykenischen Ära bis auf die Dorier*, Wien 1980, 68-72.

Cooperation

Comparative studies into LM III C pottery from Crete will, in the first instance, have to be conducted with Professor A. KANTA and A. KARETSOU. But it will be also vital to discuss our results with other archaeologists who have excavated LM III C sites in Crete. Such contacts are already going on with Ph. BETANCOURT, W. D. COULSON, B. and E. HALLAGER, G. RHETHEMIOTAKIS. As only very few Cretan material relating to the 12th and 11th centuries B.C. has been published, these personal contacts will be of capital importance.

Comparative studies with materials from *Mainland Greece* and from the Aegean islands have covered, in fact, all the years of our work at Aigeira, and we have forged contacts with most colleagues in the field. What we are waiting for are the final reports of the LH III C material from Tiryns. In the 1970s and 1980s the excavations of the late K. KILIAN were conducted synchronised with our excavations at Aigeira, and there was a mutual exchange program of visits between the teams of both sites. Although we have sound and reliable information about the evidence of Tiryns, the final publication by the late CHR. PODZUWEIT will be a basic instrument used in the seriation of LH III C pottery finds. Professor SP. IAKOVIDIS has also announced that he is going to pub-

lish the LH III C pottery found by the Greek excavation at the other key-site, Mycenae.

Just about all *Cypriote* materials relating to this period have already been published, thanks to the indefatigable energies of V. KARAGEORGHIS. Professor Karageorghis will be our main partner concerning the Cypriote part of the project. M. JAKOVOU and D. PILIDOU who have also worked on relations between Cyprus and the Aegean at the close of the Late Bronze Age have agreed to co-operate with our efforts to establish the synchronisms between Greece, Crete and Cyprus.

Chemical analyses of the Mycenaean pottery from Aigeira have already been made in previous years by the Fitch Lab of the British School at Athens. No further such analyses are required.

On the other hand, the mineral inclusions particularly of the pre-Mycenaean and of the "Barbarian" pottery have to be analysed. For this work, the co-operation of Dr. R. SAUER (Technical University of Vienna) will be sought.

T. CARTER (British School at Athens) will be studying the obsidian and radiolarite blades.

The finds of the animal remains will be studied by G. FORSTENPOINTNER of the University of Veterinary Medicine at Vienna.

Of great importance are the plant remains found in the containers of the LH III C store-rooms at Aigeira (carbonized cereals, figs and other crops). Part of these finds have already been studied several years ago. Study of the remaining samples will be included in the present project.

Concluding remarks

The correlations of the Aigeira material with other regions of the Peloponnese, with regions on the other side of the Corinthian Gulf and of Central Greece, with the Ionian islands and particularly with Crete, will add important information to our understanding of the course of events in Greece after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces. Of particular interest is what is called "Barbarian" handmade burnished pottery which, like at many other sites of LH III C, was also found at Aigeira.

In recent years, a marked regionalism of LH III C pottery developments and of pottery styles increasingly come under the spotlight of scholars like P. A. MOUNTJOY and J. RUTTER. The publication of the Aigeira material will add yet another angle to this complicated picture. It will be possible to add Achaia to the pottery provinces of LH III C, as e.g. the Argolid (LH III C finds from Mycenae, Tiryns); Laconia (Amyklaion), Attica (Perati), Euboea (Lefkandi),

the Cyclades (Melos, Naxos, Keos), the Dodecanese, Crete etc.

Moreover, the pottery sequence of Aigeira will be further evidence that the stratigraphical sequence of LH III C was not identical at all sites of the period (cf. my forthcoming article on "*The Aegean Islands and the Breakdown of the Mycenaean Palaces around*

1200 B.C."). As a matter of fact, recent studies have led us to suspecting that the chronology suggested by us for Level I b at Aigeira (LH III C Early), too, may require modification. Observations of this kind will be extremely important for ascertaining the synchronisms between LH III C of Greece, LM III C of Crete and LCypr. III A of Cyprus.